(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to allow industries to export non-traditional items without disturbing out domestic markets as well as to meet the foreign exchange earning requirements as many such non-traditional exportable items are either in short supply or are evenly balanced in domestic markets; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Export of all items, traditional and non-traditional are encouraged for increasing the foreign exchange earnings with due consideration to any effect on domestic availability. Continuous measures are taken to increase the level of domestic production, especially for exports.

Enemy Property in West Bengal

1763. SHRI JOYANTA ROY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the exact area of movable (landed) and the amount of immovable (other than landed) enemy properties in West Bengal covered by the Enemy Property Act;

(b) what is the present condition of such property; and

(c) how are these properties being utilised and what are the agencies developed to deal with the affairs of such property?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) A total of 600.42 acres of immovable property in West Bengal is covered by the Enemy Property Act, 1968. In addition to these landed properties, rights in buildings in full or in part belonging to Pakistani nationals in respect of 95 buildings located in Calcutta are vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property under the Enemy Property Act, 1968. About 5,60,000 shares of various companies whose registered offices are situated in West Bengal are vested in the CEP under the Act.

(b) The landed properties are leased out by the Custodian of Enemy Property, Mumbai, through district authorities from time to time.

(c) The immovable properties (landed) are utilised by the tenants/lessees for the purpose of cultivation. The buildings are utilised for residential purposes except in a few cases where some parts of buildings are used for commercial purposes. The Custodian of Enemy Property for India through his offices at Mumbai and Calcutta deals with the affairs of these properties with the help with District Authorities.

CII Survey Regarding Indian Exporters

1764. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether from the findings of a recent survey conducted by the Confederation of Indian Industry, it is revealed that Indian exporters are not even inspired by the profit motive and they are happy with the domestic market which offers them a ready and lucrative business;

(b) if so, whether this is perceived as a failure of Government policy which lacks adequate motivating force to boost potential exporters to come out of their despondency;

(c) whether it is a fact that companies export their products either to save taxes or to enhance the image of their products in the more profitable domestic market;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to tackle such tendency among potential exporters?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Government's attention has been drawn to a survey of Indian companies conducted by Confederation of Indian Industry in August, 1994, wherein, it has been state, among others, that companies have found the profit margin in export market to be not as good as in the domestic market. However, the survey also reveals that companies are committed to expand their export business.

(b) No, Sir. On account of the policy initiatives of the Government, exports have infact registered a high growth of about 20% in 1993-94, and growth in the current year during April—October, 1994, the latest period for which trade statistics are available, continues to be encouraging.

(c) to (e) Companies are encouraged to increase their exports, apart from domestic sales, through several promotional measures including tax exemption.

Incentives to States to Encourage Exports

1765. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 202 given in the Rajya Sabha on 8th August, 1994 and state :

(a) what progress has been made in the project;

(b) whether there are problems in implementing this project;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps have Government taken to speed up this programme?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Progress is as follows :—

(i) EXPORT PROMOTION INDUSTRIAL PARKS (EPIP SCHEME)

As on date the Government of India have approved proposals from eleven State Governments to set up EPIPs. These are of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, U.P., Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

(ii) VISHAKHAPATNAM EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE (VEPZ)

The VEPZ has been operationalised with effect from 1-4-93 on completion of basic infrastructure facilities of the first phase covering an area of 163 acres. The total land area of the Zone is 360 acres. A total of 35 Nos. of plots for Gem and Jewellery and 38 Nos. for other industrial units have been developed in the first phase and construction of one SDF is in progress. Nine project proposals have been received so far for setting up units in the Zone, all of which have been approved.

(b) to (d) No problems have so far been reported by these State Governments in implementing the projects. These Schemes are progressing satisfactorily.

Foreign Newsprint Suppliers Hiking Prices of Newsprint

1766. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Commerce is aware that the foreign newsprint suppliers have hiked up the prices of newsprint all of a sudden, after Government decanalised the import of newsprint;

(b) whether it is a fact that the foreign newsprint manufacturers have appointed agents in India and the newspapers have to import the newsprint only through their agents;

(c) whether Government consider breaking this cartel which will not only affect the newspapers but also result in loss of foreign exchange; and

(d) whether Government will consider import of newsprint through State Trading Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Under the Current Export and Import Policy, import of newsprint by actual users is permitted on the basis of entitlement certificate issued by the Registrar of Newspaper of India. The eligible importers are free to source their newsprint supplies from foreign markets on best possible terms. Presently, there is no proposal under consideration to canalise the imports of Newsprint through S. T. C.

Import of Newsprint by STC

1767. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that STC is importing newsprint even after decanalisation of import of newsprint;

(b) if not, whether the STC will consider import of newsprint at a competitive rate for the medium and small newspapers; and

(c) what is the landed cost per ton and the rate at which STC sells newsprint to small and medium Newspapers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Prior to 1-4-1992, STC had been the canalising agency for import of newsprint. However, w.e.f. 1-4-92, import of newsprint has been decanalised and STC is no longer a canalising agency for import of this commodity. Under the decanalised regime, actual users are allowed to import newsprint directly by themselves or through newsprint handling agents based on the entitlement certificates issued by the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. As an agent of actual users, STC has contracted newsprint for import. About 22,000 MTs of newsprint were imported by STC during the year 1992-93 against which a quantity of 20,000 MTs had arrived during same year and the balance quantity of 2,000 MTs arrived during 1993-94. During the year 1993-94, STC had also imported 21,000 MTs (approx), newsprint from Russia against a specific licence issued by Directorate General of Foreign Trade for sale to the actual users against their valid certificates of entitlement.

(c) The weighted average landed cost and the weighed average sale price PMT of the standard newsprint imported by